

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached is one (1) sheet of a replacement formal drawing depicting Figures 8a and 8b illustrating changes to Figure 8b.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet (1)

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-5, 8-10 and 31-58 are pending. By this amendment, claim 1, 7, 32, 34, 43, 48 and 54 are amended, and new claim 58 is added and a replacement version of Fig. 8b is provided.

On January 28, 2010, a personal interview was conducted with Examiner Blizzard, Supervisory Examiner Yu, and Applicants' representatives, Paul Bowen and David Zibelli. The Examiners are thanked for the courtesies extended during the interview.

During the interview, it was agreed to amend claim 1 to recite that the covering portion includes a woven material to which the conduit is directly connected. It was further agreed to amend claim 32 to recite a respiratory gas conduit connected to the woven material of the covering portion, and to insert the ® symbol to recite "GORE-TEX®" in appropriate claims. It was agreed that at least claims 1-32 would then distinguish over the applied art, subject to further search and consideration. In accordance with the Examiner's understanding, GORE-TEX® in its most basic definition simply includes e-PTFE, which is flexible and air-permeable. However, the basic e-PTFE may be supplemented with other layers (e.g., a cover) and/or materials as well.

As reflected in the Examiner's Interview Summary, a so-called "hard type" mask and a "fabric type" mask were discussed. The "fabric type" mask is believed to not be prior art against the current application, and appears to correspond to US Pat. Pubs. 2008/0142015 (published 6/19/2008) and parent application 2007/0175479 (published 8/2/2007, now abandoned) and WO 2009/105528 (published 8/27/2009). The "hard type" mask is disclosed in US Patent 6,662,803.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are patentable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, in the fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Account No. 14-1140 under Order No. PTB-4750-34.

Respectfully submitted,

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PTB:DJZ
Attachment:
Replacement Figure 8b (1 sheet)

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